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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: May 30, 1959

JUN 4 1959

SUBJECT: Berlin Problems and the Geneva Conference

PARTICIPANTS: Foy D. Kohler - EUR  
Jean Claude Winckler, Counselor of Embassy,  
Embassy of France  
J. H. McFarland, Jr. - GPA

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Mr. Winckler stated that he had received instructions on almost all papers previously discussed in tripartite meetings. Ambassador Alphand was anxious to know when the next meeting would be held since he was departing June 5 for an extensive western trip and would like to meet before leaving.

It was agreed to try to set up a meeting with Mr. Murphy on Thursday, with Friday morning a possible alternative.

Mr. Kohler asked if the French Embassy at Bonn had also received instructions to permit discussion of various contingency plans to move ahead there and was assured that they had.

Winckler stated with evident surprise that the French Government had accepted without change the common declaration to be issued at the time of turnover of Soviet traffic control functions to the GDR. On the matter of identification of vehicles he recalled that the French Government had preferred only marking vehicles in a distinctive manner but would accept the duplicate travel order concept, including a German translation.

Mr. Kohler commented that this was a rather good formula. It established a procedure that had a very reasonable sound to public opinion. It might solve the very difficult question of where to draw the line and eliminated controversy over "stamping" of documents.

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Winckler said there was a "but" on the agent theory. In case the Soviets remain silent and don't specifically answer an Allied communication on the subject, the French Government could not proceed on the assumption that the GDR was acting as agent of the Soviet Government in direction of Allied military traffic. There would have to be a formal Soviet declaration on the subject. His government had been very emphatic on this point.

Mr. Kohler declared his general agreement with this view but pointed out that the whole matter was a little out of our hands since it had been taken over by the Foreign Ministers.

The French Government also accepted the counter harassment proposals to be directed against Soviet bloc transport. Based upon French experience during the Indo-China and Suez crises when French ships had been denied landing rights in Arab ports, denial of landing rights would cause the Soviet bloc ships very little inconvenience, however.

On the matter of referral of the Berlin question to the UN, Couve agreed with the basic idea expressed in the first paper on this subject, that the right moment to take the matter to the UN was before the Soviets pass their responsibilities to the East Germans. He did not agree, however, that the West should move immediately upon failure of negotiations but thought we should wait until we have definite indications the Soviets are actually preparing to turn over their functions to the GDR.

Mr. Kohler declared that if we have agreement in principle on this question he didn't feel we would be lacking in evidence of Soviet intentions, very probably through their own public statements. He stressed the importance of not waiting too long and keeping our referral to the UN as close to the time of breakdown of negotiations as possible.

Winckler then referred to the second UN paper which he had received only yesterday. He had studied it carefully with Ambassador Alphant. They were not too happy about it. They thought it complicated matters without being helpful. He wondered if some of the idea in it could not be taken out of the General paper and set aside separately.

Kohler replied that he hadn't had the opportunity to study the second UN paper very carefully but would do so before the next meeting. He hoped that meeting would afford the opportunity to discuss the paper in detail. He regarded the second paper as a study of alternatives and suggested that it might be made an annex to the first paper. Winckler agreed that this might be a helpful suggestion. The only thing that Couve had suggested was the allusion in a letter to the Secretary General of the Allies intention to take conservatory measures. Mr. Kohler asked if he had suggested any language and Winckler replied negatively.

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Winckler then asked what one should think of Scotty Reston's article yesterday on the idea of a communique. Mr. Kohler replied that he didn't know with whom Reston had been talking but thought, because of the reference to aid to underdeveloped countries that it must have been Couve. He commented that our information on what is going on in Geneva is not as complete as we would like. He understood the idea of terminating the Foreign Minister's conference through a summary communique had been discussed, however.

Under Secretary Dillon had spoken with Couve about the Summit agenda and Couve had told him that if there was to be a fixed agenda the French would have to insist on the inclusion of an item on underdeveloped areas.

We thought the idea of ending the Foreign Minister's Conference with a communique was a pretty good one. The communique would list the subjects discussed during the Foreign Minister's meeting and declare that these and other subjects to be raised by the various participants would be the basis of discussion at the Summit. He noted that the Department had sent a resume of the Dillon-Couve de Murville conversation to Geneva.

Winckler commented that Couve had appeared rather optimistic about the end of the Foreign Minister's conference and seemed to feel that enough would be agreed to to justify going to a Summit meeting. He had no doubt that a Summit meeting would take place.

Mr. Kohler replied that Mr. Merchant had not been quite so optimistic but also did not seem to doubt that a Summit Conference would take place.

The conversation then switched to Khrushchev's prolonged stay in Albania and its significance. Mr. Kohler said he hadn't been able to determine its significance yet. He thought it was another attempt to muddy international waters. It might have something to do with the Yugoslavs. We had had a report from Rome that Albanian papers had stopped their attacks on the Yugoslavs a couple of weeks ago.

Winckler noted that the concept of making the Balkans a "Zone of Peace" had been a Yugoslav idea. It would be hard for them not to join any such scheme if it developed. He noted the widespread opposition in Italy to missile sites. Kohler remarked that it would be a great propaganda victory for the Soviets if we allowed ourselves to be scared into unilateral disarmament. The Italians have done pretty well to explain the facts of life in the missile age to their own people but other countries have not. The fact that Khrushchev is now threatening Greece and Italy with installation of missile bases in Albania is nothing new. He has already threatened them with nuclear destruction from Soviet territory. What difference does it make if you are going to be nuclearised whether the missile comes from 100 or 1,000 miles away? Where it lands is all that counts. He had no idea what Soviets might already have in Albania.

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Winckler said the French already had reports from their military attache in Albania concerning missile sites there.

The conversation concluded with plans to meet Thursday if it could be arranged with Mr. Murphy.

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